

REMAPPING EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

The culture of seventeenth-century politics

KEVIN SHARPE



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*Remapping early modern England: from revisionism to
the culture of politics*

The map we once conceived as a straightforward description of a terrain. What we have now learned, not least from recent criticism, is that the map projects the cartographer and his culture onto the land being charted, and even confirms and constructs the ideological contours and relief of his homeland as he perambulates other territory. Historians have not yet faced up to a similar postmodern reading of their own discipline: that ‘the past’, rather than a landscape simply elucidated by evidence, is a representation constructed by the historian from his own cultural vision as well as from the various representations that contemporaries created to discern meaning for themselves.¹ I offer here no theoretical or even working solution to this problem. What I wish to do is examine, and go some way to explain, the histories of early modern England that historians have constructed and – importantly – to urge us to pay attention to the representations that contemporaries presented of (and to) themselves: to urge a move from politics conceived (anachronistically) as the business of institutions, bureaucracies and officers to the broader politics of discourse and symbols, anxieties and aspirations, myths and memories.²

My essay is also unapologetically (as well as necessarily) personal.³ Mid-career is a suitable time to review one’s own earlier mappings, to examine where one has been the better to discern where one is going. In particular, now that its critical moment has passed, I want to explain and critique the movement known as ‘revisionism’ and to suggest a new

¹ Of all the humanities disciplines, history has remained for both better and worse, least influenced by theory. See however P. Joyce, ‘History and Post Modernism I’, *Past and Present*, 133 (1991), 204–9. Significantly a scholar often at the cutting edge sharply reacted, L. Stone, ‘History and Post Modernism III’, *Past and Present*, 135 (1992), 189–94.

² Peter Lake and I attempted such an agenda for early modern England in *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England* (Houndmills and Stanford, 1994).

³ This essay had its origins in an invitation from John Morrill to review my own scholarly career at a lively seminar in Cambridge, and was developed for a conference on Remapping British History at the Huntington Library.

agenda for the political history of early modern England, an agenda that involves not only a broader configuration of the political, but an openness to other critical perspectives on and interdisciplinary approaches to history – to the past and the exegesis of the past.

To understand approaches to seventeenth-century England we need to begin with the Whig view of history, not least because that phrase, though familiar, does more business than students usually appreciate. In the narrower sense, the Whig view of history was a necessary polemical response to the 1688 Revolution: the Whigs who forcefully removed James II to bring in William of Orange needed to make that violent fracture into a natural succession of government. They needed to marginalize the Jacobites and appropriate from them the languages of scripture, law and history through which all authority in seventeenth-century England was validated. Unlike their republican predecessors of the 1650s, the Whigs triumphed politically because they secured a cultural dominance.⁴ By recruiting the most skilful pens and brushes, the Whigs assured a peaceful succession for William. And through a programme of editions, memoirs and histories, they created a pantheon of Whig heroes and a Whig interpretation of the past: an interpretation which emphasized parliaments and property, liberties and Protestantism in England from pre-Saxon times to 1688. Though they are obviously central, and though there are some signs that scholars have begun to address them, the processes by which the Whigs secured cultural hegemony and, to a large degree, control of the past await full investigation.⁵

In the larger and more familiar sense, of course, the Whig interpretation of history is a synonym for a teleological approach to the past: in general a quest to explain the present, in particular, in the wake of the Great Reform Bill, a self-congratulatory desire to trace the origins of reformed parliamentary government, the apogee, as the radicals saw it, of political development.⁶ The figure who connects this larger vision to Whig politics is Thomas Babington Macaulay. Macaulay became a committed Whig and discerned even before 1830 that the course of parliamentary reform paved the way to a restoration of the Whigs to government. In parliament he was a leading spokesman for the Reform

⁴ Cf. below, ch. 7; K. Sharpe and S. Zwicker eds., *Refiguring Revolutions: Aesthetics and Politics from the English Revolution to the Romantic Revolution* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London 1998), introduction.

⁵ See S. Zwicker, *Lines of Authority: Politics and English Literary Culture, 1649–1689* (Ithaca, 1993), ch. 6. There is no full study of the polemics of Augustan historical writing. For a less than satisfactory beginning see L. Okie, *Augustan Historical Writing: Histories of England in the English Enlightenment* (New York, 1992).

⁶ See H. Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (1931).

Bill, the passing of which owed not a little to the power of his rhetoric.⁷ In an early letter on the subject of reform, Macaulay invoked the name of Oliver Cromwell.⁸ His vision of politics was, as he believed any vision of politics should be, informed by history. In his youth, Macaulay had penned essays on William III and Milton which, like his invocation of Cromwell, reveal how a reading of the seventeenth century shaped his approach to Whig politics in the nineteenth.⁹ Indeed for Macaulay both those centuries, and history and politics generally, were inseparable. When the Whigs had enjoyed political dominance under William it was because a Whig view of history was also the prevailing orthodoxy. Accordingly the political resurgence of the Whigs in the 1830s required a history that would displace the popular *History of England* penned in the last years of Whig ascendancy by the Tory philosopher David Hume: it demanded a history that would attribute the very material progress of England to the political principles espoused by the Whig cause and party.¹⁰ It was that history which Macaulay, after holding office in Lord Melbourne's government, turned to write: a history, as he described it, of 'all the transactions which took place between the 1688 Revolution which brought the crown into harmony with parliament and the 1832 Revolution which brought parliament into harmony with the nation'.¹¹ Macaulay's history displaced Hume's and imprinted its vision of the past on the imagination of the English. Though criticized in details, Macaulay's history, Whig history, became, in Trevor-Roper's words, 'part of the permanent acquisition of historical science'.¹² Macaulay's teleological framework was hard to escape. Even the great Samuel Rawson Gardiner, who was not uncritical of Macaulay and who followed Ranke in his efforts to engage with the past on its own terms, came to see the Victorian constitution as that historical terminus 'to which every step was constantly tending'.¹³ And thanks to Gardiner, as Macaulay, historical narrative itself appeared to be – perhaps remains – Whig.

Though a history for its time, and as its author acknowledged, an insular history,¹⁴ the influence of Macaulay's history extended beyond

⁷ J. Clive, *Thomas Babington Macaulay: the Shaping of the Historian* (New York, 1973).

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

⁹ Lord Macaulay, *The History of England*, ed. H. R. Trevor-Roper (Harmondsworth, 1979), 15–16.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 13, 20. ¹¹ *Ibid.*, 20. ¹² *Ibid.*, 33.

¹³ Quoted in J. P. Kenyon, *The History Men: the Historical Profession in England since the Renaissance* (1983), 220.

¹⁴ 'The book is quite insular in spirit. There is nothing cosmopolitan about it', quoted in Macaulay, *History*, ed. Trevor-Roper, 8.

the England of his lifetime. In the United States of America, sales of Macaulay's *History* were surpassed only by the Bible, as his message of progress and Whig politics struck a chord across the Atlantic. It was Macaulay's nephew, George Otto Trevelyan, whose *History of the American Revolution* 'supplied, in some sense, the originally intended conclusion to Macaulay's work'¹⁵ and conjoined a view of seventeenth-century English history with the myth of the Manifest Destiny of the American people to extend benefits of freedom and progress across their continent – and beyond. A vision of seventeenth-century English history was (and remained) important to America because, in the words of the great American scholar of Stuart England, Wallace Notestein, it is 'the story of how human beings have learned to govern themselves . . . [the story of] the slow accumulation of parliamentary rights and privileges', hence a vital early chapter in what my own school textbook of American history called *The History of a Free People*.¹⁶ Not least because such a national ideology retains power to this day, American historiography – especially on seventeenth-century England – has remained essentially Whig.

Moreover in Europe, the Whig view of the past drew impetus from another philosophical, historical and political movement – Marxism. At one level, Marxist may appear as distant from Whig historiography as Marx himself from Macaulay. Yet Marx's vision of history was, like the Whigs, teleological and, as for Macaulay, for Marx politics was a historical process just as history was 'that noble science of politics'.¹⁷ More particularly, in both Whig and Marxist visions was a connection between material progress and the course of history, and a sense that in England's case the seventeenth century was pivotal. Where for the Whig the civil war witnessed the triumph of liberty and parliaments over despotism, to the Marxist the English revolution marks the overthrow of feudal monarchy and aristocracy by the rising gentry and merchant classes represented in parliament. Though their political ends were quite distinct, even antagonistic, Marx and Macaulay could find common ground in an interpretation of seventeenth-century England – an alliance that helped sustain as the dominant historical interpretation what had been polemically constructed to defeat the threats of Jacobitism.

¹⁵ Macaulay, *History*, ed. Trevor-Roper, 25.

¹⁶ W. Notestein, *The Winning of the Initiative by the House of Commons* (1924), 3. The textbook was used in 1967–8.

¹⁷ Macaulay, *History*, ed. Trevor-Roper, 41. Cf. S. Collins, D. Winch and J. Burrow, *That Noble Science of Politics* (Cambridge, 1983), esp. ch. 6. And see the interesting study by A. MacLachlan, *The Rise and Fall of Revolutionary England* (Basingstoke, 1996).

Indeed a blend of Whig history, liberal Marxism and American intellectual and political culture formed the base ingredients for one of the most influential textbooks of seventeenth-century history in our own day: Lawrence Stone's *The Causes of the English Revolution*. This may appear a controversial claim, for Stone rejects Whig and Marxist alike.¹⁸ Yet in passages about 'a strong desire for widespread change . . . towards a "balanced constitution"', the thesis of the crisis of monarchy and the 'shift to new mercantile interests . . . organised to challenge the economic monopoly and political control', the voices of Macaulay and Marx as well as Tawney may be heard,¹⁹ beneath the language of social theory and models of revolution. And in its organization, Stone's history, though never crudely so, is as inherently Whig as the politics of the historian with his 'belief in the limitless possibilities of improvement in the human condition' – a belief, perhaps, by 1972 more widespread in American than in English intellectual culture.²⁰

Though then the product of a moment, or moments, the Whig view of English history has sustained a dominance which calls for explanation. And the explanation is both ideological and historical. Perhaps from the eighteenth century onwards, Whig history has been an important component of English and American nationalism and national identity, of the moral foundations of colonial expansion and imperial power. (Here it may be no accident that two leading critics of Whig historiography – Sir Lewis Namier and Sir Geoffrey Elton – were foreign.) Secondly and related, Whig history is also Protestant history and in both England and America it underpinned an Anglo-Saxon Protestant elite as the natural class of government.²¹ Thirdly, Whiggery has dominated historical interpretation because it infiltrated the records we use to study the past and the methods by which we approach and represent it. Just as Milton and Ludlow were edited and re-presented as protochampions of the Whig cause, so Thomas Rymer, the Whig historiographer royal, and John Rushworth, former secretary to Oliver Cromwell, compiled collections of documents which were intended as 'lectures of prudence, policy and morality' from which each could 'read

¹⁸ L. Stone, *The Causes of the English Revolution, 1529–1642* (1972), 54, 38–9. Perhaps the term 'Marxisant' is better. See MacLachlan, *Rise and Fall*, 323, 419.

¹⁹ Stone, *Causes of the English Revolution*, 30, 54; cf. 57 and MacLachlan, *Rise and Fall*, 164–8, 235, 320–3.

²⁰ Stone, *Causes of the English Revolution*, ix; cf. D. Cannadine, 'British History: Past, Present – and Future?', *Past and Present*, 116 (1987), 69–91.

²¹ Linda Colley stresses the importance of Protestantism in forging the nation in *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1837* (1992), but the relationship of Protestantism to the Whig view of the past is not explored.

to himself his own improvement'.²² The polemic of these collections was all the more effective in their restraint from direct partisanship or gloss. As a consequence, the reading of history they promoted appeared inevitable. And Whig history, like Whig politics, performed the most subtle of ideological moves in erasing the traces of its own polemic – to appear the natural, national story, as it did again in Macaulay and has done until recently.

At no point has the Whig view of history escaped challenge or criticism. The political opponents of Rushworth and later of Macaulay were quick to demonstrate the partisan leanings of their judgements and use of evidence.²³ There are, too, more fundamental objections to Whig history. First, it is inherently an ahistorical approach to the past, concerned to explain a present rather than elucidate the autonomy and differences of an earlier age. The Whig writes of Newton's mathematics and not his experiments in alchemy, of Ludlow's republicanism but not his millenarianism. Whig history is also anachronistic in its address to language: it invests seventeenth-century words such as liberty and rights with later (different) meanings; and it ignores the vocabularies and terms, like *ius* and grace, that were essential to early modern discourse but later passed into insignificance.²⁴ It fails to explain why civil war erupted in 1642 not, say, in 1637 or in 1629 when parliament was dissolved. In Whig histories, moments – moments when decisive actions were taken or not taken – are reduced to points on a graph, or milestones on a road that the men and women of the past were destined to follow.²⁵

These were the objections that provoked the revisionist critique of Whig history in the mid-1970s. What, however, has to be recognized is that such criticisms were not entirely new; and what has still to be explained is why in the mid-1970s the attack was escalated to the point at which the Whig edifice toppled. In the 1960s, Geoffrey Elton and John Kenyon had asked questions and offered new suggestions that wounded the Whig interpretation of Stuart England.²⁶ But the mortal blow was

²² See A. B. Worden ed., *Edmond Ludlow: a Voice from the Watch Tower, 1660–1662* (Camden Soc., 4th ser., 21, 1978); S. Zwicker, 'Lines of Authority: Politics and Literary Culture in the Restoration', in K. Sharpe and S. Zwicker eds., *Politics of Discourse: the Literature and History of Seventeenth-Century England* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1987), 230–70, esp. 246–7; J. Rushworth, *Historical Collections* (7 vols., 1659–1701), II, sig. A.

²³ See J. Nalson, *An Impartial Collection of the Great Affairs of State* (1682); Macaulay, *History*, ed. Trevor-Roper, 31, 33–4.

²⁴ The 'linguistic turn' in historical studies, pioneered by John Pocock and Quentin Skinner, is therefore fundamentally anti-Whig.

²⁵ The term 'milestones' is, notoriously, Stone's (*Causes of the English Revolution*, 94).

²⁶ See especially G. R. Elton, 'A High Road to Civil War?', in C. H. Carter ed., *From the Renaissance to the Counter-Reformation* (1965), 325–47 (the metaphor anticipates and contests Stone's); J. P. Kenyon ed., *The Stuart Constitution, 1603–1688* (Cambridge, 1966).

not struck for several more years – until on both sides of the Atlantic and within a short space of time, Conrad Russell, Mark Kishlansky and myself fired simultaneous salvos from different angles to the Whig citadel.²⁷ There have been few attempts to explain revisionism, and those few unsatisfactory. To Stone the narrow antiquarian empiricism of the generation trained through the Ph.D. saw a shift from the big picture to meaningless detail and pedantry.²⁸ Yet Russell has no Ph.D. and was an established scholar in mid-career as other revisionists were just graduating. The arguments of generational disenchantment with post-imperial Britain meet with similar difficulties.²⁹ As for politics and ideology, from what I know the leading revisionists came from quite different political sympathies, perspectives and experiences and shared few obvious ideological commitments or passions. Moreover, for all that they were lumped together, they had rather different historical points to make. Conrad Russell, in the seminal article of revisionism, argued for the impotence of parliaments both as legislators and controllers of the purse strings. Mark Kishlansky, through study of parliamentary procedure, posited that politics before the civil war was characterized by consensus not conflict. Having worked on the career of the antiquary Sir Robert Cotton, I was led to question the model of opposing sides of government and opposition and to suggest that political tensions and problems affected but were not caused by relations between crown and parliament. It is worth noting, since it may not be widely known, that, initially, the three of us worked independently and, as later publications have shown, were formulating rather different new approaches to early Stuart England. But what united the revisionists was a conviction that the old Whig history could no longer be modified or repaired. We questioned the model of escalating conflict between crown and parliament; calling for closer study of more evidence, we criticized the selective narrative constructed around high points of conflict; and we rejected teleological determinism as a historical philosophy. Whether the politics of that last move owed something to the decline of nationalism, whether a portrait of politics drawn in the chalks of interest and intrigue signalled a fading idealism (on both sides of the Atlantic) is not yet clear.

What is apparent is that to some of its critics revisionism meant more,

²⁷ C. Russell, 'Parliamentary History in Perspective, 1604–29', *History*, 61 (1976), 1–27; Russell, *Parliaments and English Politics 1621–1629* (Oxford, 1979); M. Kishlansky, 'The Emergence of Adversary Politics in the Long Parliament', *Journ. Mod. Hist.*, 49 (1977), 617–40; K. Sharpe ed., *Faction and Parliament: Essays on Early Stuart History* (Oxford, 1978), introduction and passim; Sharpe, *Sir Robert Cotton 1586–1631: History and Politics in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1979).

²⁸ L. Stone, 'The Revival of Narrative: Reflections on a New Old History', *Past and Present*, 85 (1979), 3–24. ²⁹ Cannadine, 'British History'.

dangerously more, than a new interpretation of early seventeenth-century England. For Professor Hexter the removal of parliaments from the centre stage of Stuart history threatened to weaken the foundation of liberty in the modern world and he moved swiftly to try to counter the revisionist challenge and re-validate the traditional story.³⁰ Professors Rabb and Stone appeared more concerned about the consequences for historical study itself, fearing that the move from a big story to detail, and from an old certainty to question and confusion, robbed history of meaning and value.³¹ Both were ideological critiques that subtly reveal the ways in which, as recent debates on multiculturalism have made noisily apparent, historical narrative underpinned Western liberalism. But whatever the sources of their discontent, the critics of revisionism, especially Derek Hirst, were right to object that some revisionists paid far too little attention to ideas and ideology in an era when men spoke passionately about values and beliefs.³² To read some revisionist history is like watching a film without its noisy, dramatic soundtrack, to see politics reduced to a series of silent moves and manoeuvres.

In recent years therefore, in various essays, post-revisionist scholarship has returned – rightly – to the crucial issue of ideology. In some cases this has taken the form of undisguised political polemic or crudely simplistic history. Hexter's Center for the History of Freedom (financed by the conservative Heritage Foundation and Freedom Inc.) only thinly veils its twentieth-century ideological agenda.³³ Johann Sommerville's study of *Politics and Ideology 1603–40* too simply places political thinkers into predetermined and opposed boxes of 'absolutist' and 'constitutionalist' without engaging the complexities and contradictions that characterized them all.³⁴ But the best post-revisionist work, by Peter Lake, Ann Hughes and Richard Cust, has argued powerfully for ideological conflict in early Stuart England, without resorting to the old model of govern-

³⁰ See J. H. Hexter, 'Power Struggle, Parliament and Liberty in Early Stuart England', *Journ. Mod. Hist.*, 50 (1978), 1–50; Hexter, 'The Early Stuarts and Parliament: Old Hat and the Nouvelle Vague', *Parl. Hist.*, 1 (1982), 101–25.

³¹ T. K. Rabb, 'The Role of the Commons', *Past and Present*, 92 (1981), 55–78; Stone, 'Revival of Narrative'; and in both cases conference addresses that I attended.

³² D. Hirst, 'The Place of Principle', *Past and Present*, 92 (1981), 79–99.

³³ See, for example, J. H. Hexter ed., *Parliament and Liberty from the Reign of Elizabeth to the English Civil War* (Stanford, 1992) and Hexter, 'The Birth of Modern Freedom', *Times Lit. Supp.* (21 Jan. 1983), 51–4.

³⁴ J. P. Sommerville, *Politics and Ideology in England 1603–1640* (1986). For an effective critique, cf. G. Burgess, *The Politics of the Ancient Constitution: an Introduction to English Political Thought 1603–1642* (Basingstoke, 1992); Burgess, *Absolute Monarchy and the Stuart Constitution* (New Haven and London, 1996).

ment and opposition.³⁵ In the ideology of the 'country', they have suggested, may be discerned a set of values at odds with those of the court and the beginnings of an erosion of trust in the government.³⁶ Only now is a new generation of scholars beginning to take up their call for an analysis of political rhetoric and the relationships of political discourse to political tension and conflict.³⁷

Some of the revisionists, responding to the charge that by removing ideology they had made civil war inexplicable, pursued a different agenda: the role of religion in engendering conflict.³⁸ With the rejection of Whig history, the religious dimension for some time seemed lost. For the old thesis of a revolutionary puritanism providing the ideology and organization for resistance in England, as Calvinism had on the continent, had been questioned by Patrick Collinson and others.³⁹ However, ecclesiastical historians identified a new source of instability in the reign of Charles I in the rise of Arminianism which they claimed broke from the Calvinist orthodoxy and shattered the consensus of the Jacobean church, exciting fears of popery.⁴⁰ Conrad Russell included the seminal essay in which that thesis was outlined in his early volume on the origins of the civil war, and it evidently offered him some answer to the explanation of conflict which his own researches had rendered more difficult.⁴¹ Indeed for several revisionists religion appeared to solve the central conundrum: of how a state which celebrated consensus and unity fractured and divided into violent conflict. To John Morrill, it was religious commitments that would override the intrinsic localism and neutralism of the English provinces and drive at least the leading protagonists to take sides in what he came to describe as England's war of religion.⁴²

³⁵ R. Cust, *The Forced Loan and English Politics 1626–28* (Oxford, 1987); R. Cust and A. Hughes eds., *Conflict in Early Stuart England* (1989); P. Lake, 'The Collection of Ship Money in Cheshire during the 1630s: a Case Study of Relations between Central and Local Government', *Northern Hist.*, 17 (1981), 44–71. ³⁶ Cust and Hughes, *Conflict*, 19–21, 29–31.

³⁷ For example, Alastair Bellany (see his essay in Sharpe and Lake, *Culture and Politics*, 285–310) and Glenn Burgess.

³⁸ This is notably the case with John Morrill, whose historiographical moves may now be traced effectively through his collected essays, *The Nature of the English Revolution* (1993); see especially the new autobiographical introductions to each section.

³⁹ The old thesis is well represented by M. Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints* (Cambridge, Mass., 1965) and C. Hill, *Puritanism and Revolution* (1958, 1962); cf. P. Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (1967) and *The Religion of Protestants* (Oxford, 1982).

⁴⁰ This thesis was outlined in the long unpublished dissertation by N. Tyacke, now published as *Anti-Calvinists: the Rise of English Arminianism c. 1590–1640* (Oxford, 1987).

⁴¹ N. Tyacke, 'Puritanism, Arminianism and Counter-Revolution', in C. S. R. Russell ed., *The Origins of the English Civil War* (1973), 199–234.

⁴² J. S. Morrill, 'The Religious Context of the English Civil War', *Trans. Royal Hist. Soc.*, 5th ser., 34 (1984), 155–78.

Russell extended Tyacke's original argument beyond the Church of England. Pointing to the different religious settlements in the kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland over which the early Stuarts ruled, he pointed out how changes in the one church had profound and sometimes destabilizing consequences for the other. Religion was the most complex of the problems involved in ruling multiple kingdoms and when Charles I upset the delicate balance – not only in England – he started a British civil war which brought violence to England only last of his realms.⁴³

The thesis of an orthodox Calvinism disrupted by the rise of revolutionary Arminianism, as I and others have argued elsewhere, seems fraught with too many problems to bear the interpretational edifice it is now asked to support.⁴⁴ Charges of Arminianism were heard little in early Stuart parliaments – and Ian Green's monumental new work suggests that, outside the universities and high ecclesiastical debate, Arminianism impinged little on life or worship in the parishes.⁴⁵ As for the 'British problem', it is not obvious that anyone other than the king saw the ecclesiastical issues in these terms, and, as John Morrill observes, it is far from clear that Charles I himself pursued a 'British' policy.⁴⁶ But perhaps the greatest objection to the religious explanations of the civil war is the attenuated notion of religion that informs them. Religion was not just about doctrine, liturgy or ecclesiastical government; it was a language, an aesthetic, a structuring of meaning, an identity, a politics.⁴⁷ As Peter Lake and others have argued, 'popery' conjured ideas of corruption, whoredom and anarchy, as well as doctrines of merit or the mass; and Protestantism became a polemical rhetoric and symbol as well as a faith.⁴⁸ We cannot fully understand the religious element of early Stuart conflict without an understanding of those broader significations – of the political culture itself.

And so for all the rich historical research, we were (and are) left with the problem of how the political culture failed to prevent civil war, indeed about the nature of, and changes in, the political culture of early

⁴³ See C. S. Russell, *The Causes of the English Civil War* (Oxford, 1990), ch. 5.

⁴⁴ See K. Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven and London, 1992), ch. 6; P. White, 'The Rise of Arminianism Reconsidered', *Past and Present*, 101 (1983), 34–54 and White, *Predestination, Policy and Polemic: Conflict and Consensus in the English Church from the Reformation to the Civil War* (Cambridge, 1992); J. Davies, *The Caroline Captivity of the Church* (Oxford, 1992). See now too I. Green, *The Christian's ABC* (Oxford, 1996), ch. 8, which undermines many of Tyacke's claims.

⁴⁵ Green, *The Christian's ABC*.

⁴⁶ J. Morrill, 'A British Patriarchy? Ecclesiastical Imperialism under the Early Stuarts', in A. Fletcher and P. Roberts eds., *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 1994), 209–37. ⁴⁷ Cf. below, ch. 10.

⁴⁸ P. Lake, 'Anti-Popery: the Structure of a Prejudice', in Cust and Hughes, *Conflict*, 72–106.

modern England. To be fair these were questions that some revisionists had always considered important. Such issues underline Kishlansky's arguments about the emergence of adversary politics. In my *Sir Robert Cotton*, I endeavoured to chart how perceptions of the medieval past revealed and intensified growing political anxieties, as in an essay on the Earl of Arundel I argued for the importance of ideas of aristocracy, counsel, stoicism, of attitudes to aesthetics and style in shaping political allegiances and positions.⁴⁹ Though such values and ideas did not to me sustain any thesis about government and opposition, they certainly evidenced ideological tensions and conflicts about values which required further exploration.

During the mid-1980s, again quite independently, two former revisionists extended their studies of politics into exegesis of broader political practices and texts. In his brilliant study of parliamentary elections, Kishlansky explained how a shift from the nomination and selection to the contested election of MPs signalled a broader social change: from a culture of honour and deference to one of division and choice – the process of politicization.⁵⁰ In a thesis that touched on transformations in social relations, values and discourse, Kishlansky interestingly opened with a reading of a literary text – Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* – and the 'clash of values' at which the playwright 'dimly hinted'.⁵¹ At the same time, I had completed a study of drama, poetry and masques at the Caroline court as texts of politics. Whilst initially drawn to these in order to understand what was 'Cavalier' about pre-civil war court culture, I soon discovered that, far from simple pacans to monarchy, such texts themselves disclosed political debates within the court, and even anxieties about the exercise of authority and the style of monarchy. And I argued that, far from being confined to tract or speech, political ideas were articulated in the discourse of love in early modern England, and that that discourse could voice criticism as well as compliment.⁵²

My own work (perhaps Kishlansky's opening pages too) was influenced at this time by the critical school of new historicism. After the publication in 1980 of Stephen Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, a group of critics turned to a new historicizing of Renaissance literary

⁴⁹ See Kishlansky, 'The Emergence of Adversary Politics'; K. Sharpe, 'The Earl of Arundel, His Circle and the Opposition to the Duke of Buckingham 1618–1628', in *Faction and Parliament*, 209–44; see also below, ch. 9.

⁵⁰ M. Kishlansky, *Parliamentary Selection: Social and Political Choice in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1986). ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁵² K. Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment: the Politics of Literature in the England of Charles I* (Cambridge, 1987).

texts and an interrogation of literature, especially the drama, as debates about power and authority.⁵³ Though the Foucaultian model underlying much new historicism seemed reductive and its gestures to historicizing often inadequate, it seemed to me that literature, again especially the drama, presented the historian with uniquely rich evidence, the opportunity to hear contemporaries airing questions and anxieties that seldom find expression in the traditional materials of political history.⁵⁴ A future collaboration between critics and historians, it seemed, might promise a richer exploration of both the politics of a variety of texts and the textuality of early modern politics. It was in order to advance such an agenda that Steve Zwicker and I, after hours of fruitful dialogue at the Institute for Advanced Study, embarked on a collection of essays that was published in 1987 as *Politics of Discourse*.⁵⁵ As we submitted our volume to press, Zwicker and I considered many other possibilities that might be opened by interdisciplinary study: the royalist literature of exile (philosophy, history and romance), the politics of Restoration comedy and Rochester's pornographic verse, the power of Whig criticism that marginalized cavalier lyric. But for me, *Criticism and Compliment* had emerged from, but grown to interrupt, a different study. In 1980, at the high point of revisionist historiography, I had commenced research for what was expected to be a short book on the 1630s.⁵⁶ The project originated from questions central to the debate between revisionists and their critics. How important were parliaments in early Stuart England? Why did Charles I, who had called several, decide to rule without them? How could or did government function without them? Did ideological lines or religious divisions harden during that decade? What were Charles I's aims and political values, and how did the 1630s contribute to the origins of civil war? When I set out, I might have expected that these questions could be answered from the normal sources of political history. Research, however, confirmed the sense I had gleaned from the study of Stuart historical writing, then drama and poetry, that the political

⁵³ S. Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (Chicago, 1980); J. Goldberg, *James I and the Politics of Literature* (Baltimore and London, 1983); S. Greenblatt ed., *Representing the Renaissance* (Berkeley, 1988). New historicism, as MacLachlan reminds us, was intrinsically anti-revisionist: *Rise and Fall*, 267.

⁵⁴ See H. Veesser ed., *The New Historicism* (1989); G. Harpham, 'Foucault and the New Historicism', *Amer. Lit. Hist.*, 3 (1991), 360-75.

⁵⁵ Sharpe and Zwicker, *Politics of Discourse*; cf. Sharpe, 'The Politics of Literature in Renaissance England', *History*, 71 (1986), 235-47, also in Sharpe, *Politics and Ideas in Early Stuart England* (1989), ch. 10.

⁵⁶ A preliminary report was written in K. Sharpe, 'The Personal Rule of Charles I', in H. Tomlinson ed., *Before the English Civil War* (1983), 53-78, 192-6; Sharpe, *Politics and Ideas*, ch. 3.

culture of Caroline England could not be understood from just the state paper or lieutenancy book, sermon or deposition. Charles I and his court represented themselves through a variety of media as well as pronouncements and the painting and architectural plan were as important to his vision of kingship as the proclamation. By the time I had written *The Personal Rule of Charles I*, whatever support it may have lent to revisionist arguments, it was not a book from which ideas, values, ideology were absent.⁵⁷ True, it rejected the thesis of court/country conflict, but it was not an argument that denied opposition nor its articulation in the politics of ballad and symbol.⁵⁸

During the 1980s, as I worked on *Criticism and Compliment* and *The Personal Rule*, I became increasingly dissatisfied with the historical methods and approaches of revisionism. As practised in particular by Conrad Russell, revisionist history privileged the manuscript (the more arcane the better) over the printed source and implicitly rejected literary, artistic or architectural documents. Such preferences emerge from and reinforce a view of history, and politics, as the story of the high intrigues of self-conscious political actors.⁵⁹ This view excluded from the picture the silent backbencher, and the wider public considerations of the leading political players. Such revisionism also rehearses a naïvely rigid distinction between reality and representation. It takes state papers as 'factual' documents that reveal, where pamphlets and plays, 'fiction', obscure or mislead. Yet this is both to ignore a rich vein of evidence for the perceptions of politics and to be deaf to the rhetoricity of all political locutions and performances. Remarkably, no historian of parliament studies the speeches as a rhetorical performance, as an act intended to persuade and constructed with (different) auditors and conventions of persuasion in mind.⁶⁰ Just as remarkably, Russell can write hundreds of pages about Charles I without ever referring to a picture.

To make these points is to remind ourselves how revisionist history, perhaps most political history, proceeded during the 1970s and '80s, largely oblivious to other critical and historical approaches that urged address to a broader political culture and different texts and methods for reading it. One, as we have seen, was new historicism. If new historicism

⁵⁷ *The Personal Rule* has been received mainly as a 'revisionist' book. If (and the if is important) it is revisionist in its conclusions, it departs widely from revisionism in its engagement with masque, play and portrait, and with genre and rhetoric, as the materials of politics.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, see chs. 10–12.

⁵⁹ Here I am fundamentally at odds with Professor Russell: see Sharpe and Lake, *Culture and Politics*, introduction.

⁶⁰ There is no such analysis in Russell's major accounts of parliaments.

promised more than it delivered as a method, this was not least because few historians took up the challenge of situating and reading literary texts in their historical moment.⁶¹ The best work, however, by Annabel Patterson, Michael Schoenfeldt and Steven Zwicker, has left us in no doubt of the wealth of insights to be gleaned from full exegesis of a text in its discursive and political moment.⁶² Not only is it regrettable that so few historians have taken such scholarship on board, or extended enquiry into poems and songs written by princes.⁶³ It is unforgivable that they have failed to develop the critical skills of close reading, rhetorical analysis, sensitivity to genre and generic play, awareness of pronominalization and the authorial voice, and so on. Here the English historical establishment's (often healthy) contempt for theorizing has actually impoverished working methods – the capacity just to get on with it which is the empiricist's boast.

Two leading historians, of course, have pioneered a theoretical and critical address to such issues of language and rhetoric. Drawing on the work of linguistic philosophers and speech-act theorists, John Pocock and Quentin Skinner have revolutionized the history of political thought.⁶⁴ In a quest to recover the intentions of an author and the political performance of a text, Pocock and Skinner have redirected the history of political thought to the history of discourse and they have rewritten that history as a set of paradigmatic shifts of languages and idioms – Pocock arguing for a move from the validating discourses of grace and custom to those of rights and commerce.⁶⁵ More recently, both have moved from the author to the performance and reception of texts, drawing on the reception theorists such as Stanley Fish.⁶⁶ The bril-

⁶¹ The exceptions were Blair Worden and myself. Worden published a wide range of essays which were noted for close historical situating and re-reading of Jonson, Marvell and Milton. See now his *The Sound of Virtue: Politics in Philip Sidney's Arcadia* (New Haven and London, 1996).

⁶² See, for example, A. Patterson, *Fables of Power: Aesopian Writing and Political History* (Durham, N.C. and London, 1991); Patterson, *Reading Between the Lines* (1993); Patterson, *Reading Holinshed's Chronicles* (Chicago, 1994); M. Schoenfeldt, *Prayer and Power: George Herbert and Renaissance Courtship* (Chicago, 1991); Zwicker, *Lines of Authority*. See too below pp. 376–82.

⁶³ I am planning a study of royal writing from Henry VIII's love songs to James II's devotional writings in exile. See below, pp. 23–4.

⁶⁴ See, for example, J. G. A. Pocock, *Politics Language and Time* (New York, 1971); Q. Skinner, 'Some Problems in the Analysis of Political Thought and Action', *Polit. Theory*, 23 (1974), 277–303; J. Tully ed., *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and His Critics* (Cambridge, 1988).

⁶⁵ Q. Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (2 vols., Cambridge, 1978); J. G. A. Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law* (Cambridge, 1957; 2nd edn 1987); Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, 1975); Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce and History* (Cambridge, 1985). Cf. MacLachlan, *Rise and Fall*, ch. 7.

⁶⁶ Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce and History*, 20; Pocock, 'Texts as Events: Reflections on the History of Political Thought', in Sharpe and Zwicker, *Politics of Discourse*, 21–34. Pocock cites approvingly S.

liance of their methodological reflections and their histories has rightly been credited with effecting a 'linguistic turn' in the history of political thought. But – curiously – little of this new perspective has informed the work of historians of politics. Though both Skinner and Pocock urged that it should not be, the history of political thought, even after the linguistic turn, remains dominated by the canonical text and no historians have traced the paradigmatic discursive or idiomatic shifts through genres such as the statute and proclamation, the parliamentary speech or assize sermon.⁶⁷ Early Stuart political history continues to be written innocent of the linguistic turn: in Conrad Russell's oeuvre there is no mention of Skinner.

Language is only one of the systems through which societies construct meaning. During the 1970s, Clifford Geertz in a brilliant study and collection of methodological essays reoriented the anthropological study of culture.⁶⁸ In *The Interpretation of Cultures*, Geertz argued that culture was always also politics, 'a set of control mechanisms . . . for the governing of behaviour', and that the representations a society constructs – in festival or play or display – embody and signify political codes and values.⁶⁹ Geertz's symbolic anthropology proved to be a major inspiration for the new historicists, especially Stephen Greenblatt who adapted and retitled the methodology a 'poetics of culture'.⁷⁰ Its influence on historians of culture and politics, however, has been less apparent. True, social historians of early modern England have recently paid fruitful attention to the charivari and shaming rituals through which village cultures constructed and reinforced a system of local order.⁷¹ But again we note that in David Underdown's recent *Revel, Riot and Rebellion* there is no reference to Geertz or his critics.⁷² A full reading of ritual and display, elite and popular, of games and pastimes as significations of social

Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, Mass., 1980). Skinner appears less enthusiastic about 'reader response' criticism, see Tully, *Meaning and Context*, 267–73.

⁶⁷ There are the glimmers of change. Under the supervision of John Guy, Stephen Alford has studied the rhetoric of draft legislation and legislation in Elizabethan England. See now, S. Alford, *The Early Elizabethan Polity* (Cambridge, 1997). I am grateful to Steve Alford for permission to see some of his work in advance of publication.

⁶⁸ C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1975). ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁷⁰ Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, 4–5; see too J. Bender, *Imagining the Penitentiary: Fiction and the Architecture of Mind in Eighteenth-Century England* (Chicago, 1987).

⁷¹ See, for example, D. Underdown, 'The Taming of the Scold: the Enforcement of Patriarchal Authority in Early Modern England' and S. Amussen, 'Gender, Family and the Social Order 1560–1725', both in A. Fletcher and J. Stevenson eds., *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1985), 196–217. Neither refers to Geertz.

⁷² D. Underdown, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England 1603–1660* (Oxford, 1985).

relations and control mechanisms is needed. And, we might add, a full understanding of early modern politics and government requires consideration of Geertz's argument that power exists as 'really' in display and representation as in the institutions and mechanics of society.

It is, I think, a comment on the institutional arrangements and practices of English academic and humanistic culture that I was first led to engage with new historicism, the linguistic turn and Geertzian anthropology in the United States of America. In part this was the consequence of the happy accident of meeting Geertz at Princeton in 1981, and new historicist critics such as Jonathan Goldberg and others the same year. Yet, more than happenstance, it was my residence in an interdisciplinary institute, my release from the confines of a single academic department and an uncompromising English empiricism, that opened my thinking to these dialogues and perspectives.⁷³ The challenge of rethinking one's critical and working practices does not come easy and I resisted (regrettably still too much resist) the full implications of these schools in researching and writing history. All, however, have continued to influence my approach to evidence and choice of subject; and for some years I have thought about some fusion of these textual and ethnographical methods with the best trait of empirical and revisionist history: its close attention to the precise historical moment.

Indeed it was such reflections that led me to a first foray into what I see as a long-term future research agenda. In what remains for me the essay that I am most pleased to have written, I endeavoured to interrogate the questions of consensus and conflict in early Stuart England through a wide range of discourses, and, more broadly, demonstrated that politics embraced cultural practices such as horse-riding and bee-keeping, music and games.⁷⁴ Work on the 'Commonwealth of Meanings' strengthened my sense that discourse analysis could fruitfully be extended to a broader corpus of texts – texts such as chess-playing manuals, in which our own culture would not expect to find such a politicized language.⁷⁵ Beyond that it also suggested that, as with equestrian portraits or horse-riding, discourse needed to be read alongside the ideology of performances and their traces in visual evidence. Increasingly it seemed to me that there was a myriad of other languages (besides the paradigmatic discourse traced by Pocock) in which systems

⁷³ The Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton was also where I first met Steven Zwicker who was, significantly, a visiting fellow working on Dryden in the School of Historical Studies.

⁷⁴ K. Sharpe, 'A Commonwealth of Meanings: Languages, Analogues, Ideas and Politics': below, ch. 2. This has been read too simply as another revisionist depiction of a consensual political culture: the plurals in the title are important. ⁷⁵ Or card-playing: cf. below, ch. 7.

of values and order were encoded – languages such as those of chivalry and the pastoral. Thinking along these lines suggested a rather different history – one that recognized that ideas of the ‘country’ were shaped by paintings and poems, that attitudes to a favourite such as Buckingham were formed by the codes of chivalry and reading classical histories, that a fashion for Tacitus provided a language for articulating discontents with corruption. I became certain that what we needed was a new approach to early modern history that would ask both how a diversity of languages and cultural texts provided ideological contexts (hence meaning) to individual moments and occurrences; and (by corollary) how specific episodes made immediate those texts and shaped the reading of them by and for contemporaries.

My general sense of a need for a cultural turn in early modern studies met its own particular moment when Macmillan invited me to edit a new collection on the early Stuarts. Having still to finish *The Personal Rule*, and questioning whether the time was right, I initially declined. However, I soon came to see that this was an opportunity to move forward from the sterile impasse of debates about revisionism and asked Peter Lake, a post/anti-revisionist and friend with whom I had always enjoyed a stimulating dialogue, to join me in the enterprise. We determined that, subject to the willingness of the best scholars in a variety of disciplines to contribute, the volume would range over histories and translations, poems and plays, paintings and architecture, popular pamphlets and ballads.⁷⁶ Our joint purpose would be to reject the consensus v. conflict model and to explore the performance of ideology in early modern political culture, from a variety of perspectives and texts. What emerged, as we argued in our introduction, was a set of common validating languages which contemporaries read, fused and glossed in quite different ways (at times conflicting ways); and a struggle (unresolved) to claim those languages and representations, to control meaning itself.

Whilst we would like to think that *Culture and Politics* marked an important move in early modern historiography, it raised more questions than it answered. In particular it implicitly posed questions how, given the multivalent and conflicting interpretations and constructions of meaning performed by contemporaries, a culture of order and obedience held; and why in 1642 it fractured, turning interpretative conflict into civil war. Beyond that, we might want to ask how after a violent revolution the political culture performed to reconstitute authority and

⁷⁶ Sharpe and Lake, *Culture and Politics*. The volume lacks essays on music and dance.

stability, how in 1688 the English nation avoided another civil war and how – to return to an earlier point – the Jacobite cause was culturally as well as politically subjected.⁷⁷

In the second half of this essay, I want to sketch a map of this territory and of a number of approaches to it that I wish to explore. Before I do, however, it is worth recalling that half of the essays in *Culture and Politics* were written by scholars not in history departments, and that few historians have addressed the topics of literature, art and architecture they contributed. A recent survey of books on the seventeenth century led me to the conclusion that some of the most interesting explorations of early modern culture are not now being written by historians but by cultural critics interested in the politics of language and rhetoric, fable and romance, sexuality and gender.⁷⁸ Where literary scholarship has definitely taken a historical turn, historians, even young historians, have shown little interest in a more interdisciplinary praxis. Indeed some recent work indicates an intellectual retreat into the confines of the case study which, whatever its potential for broader illumination, has light thrown only on itself.⁷⁹ As Steven Zwicker and I argue elsewhere, the case study sits on a number of discursive and ideological trajectories and planes which it can help to examine and explore. To explore the intertextuality of meaning historians will need not only to transcend the barriers of their own subgenres (social history, gender history) but open their gates to a variety of critical practices and disciplines.⁸⁰

II

One journey through the political culture of early modern England might see the terrain as follows. The Reformation marked the hitherto greatest ideological fissure in the English polity and society. The very divisions that were its consequence prompted, even necessitated, the construction and dissemination of an organic representation of the commonweal at a time when it faced the threat of fracture.⁸¹ This was the tension at the centre of early modern political culture. Nervous governments went to some lengths to gloss those ambiguities and fis-

⁷⁷ Cf. Sharpe and Zwicker, *Refiguring Revolutions*, introduction. ⁷⁸ See below, ch. 10.

⁷⁹ For both interdisciplinary openness and case-study confinement see S. Amussen and M. Kishlansky eds., *Political Culture and Cultural Politics in Early Modern England* (Manchester and New York, 1995) and below, ch. 11. ⁸⁰ Sharpe and Zwicker, *Refiguring Revolutions*, introduction.

⁸¹ The term 'commonweal' itself comes into currency at a time of the greatest threat of political fracture and social dissolution. See G. R. Elton, *Reform and Renewal* (Cambridge, 1973) and W. R. D. Jones, *The Tudor Commonwealth, 1529–1559* (1970).

tures. Homilies on obedience, Anglican apologia, the appropriation of religious rites in the art of majesty, the emergence of the court as a theatre of authority were all developed to underpin a culture of order and deference. To a large extent they succeeded: few voices articulated the language of resistance; condemned felons usually delivered a loyal speech of atonement on the scaffold; in the parishes and villages, social historians discover a popular culture of often rigid order and control that echoed the fears of anarchy and injunctions to obedience issuing from above.⁸² The political reality of sixteenth-century England was quite other: the governing class and the realm were divided over religion, over loyalty to the faith and monarch, to self and state. If – and the if here is important – a fiction of unity veiled (the mixed metaphor is deliberately multi-media) that harsh reality, or permitted contemporaries not to confront it, that owed much to the brilliance of Tudor royal representation. Skilfully Henry VIII, most of all Elizabeth, appropriated the divisive rituals of religion for a unifying mystery of state.⁸³ An Erastian church and sacralized monarchy not only saved England from religious war; they elevated the Tudors to the height of divine-right rule. This fragile awe of majesty was punctured by the succession of James VI. The Reformation in Scotland had involved a more direct experience of, and open accommodation with, religious division and led to a demystification of state as well as church.⁸⁴ Less developed than in England, the Scottish court was far removed from the mystical rituals of Gloriana.⁸⁵ When he came thence to England, James revealed little interest in masques or sitting for portraits; his penchant for debate and participation in the political process rationalized the political culture, making debate about government, even monarchy, acceptable.⁸⁶ James may have been confident of his ability to win a war of words, but, as the newsbooks and political squibs of his reign make apparent, the harsh realities of debate knocked the monarchy from the pedestal of worship. Charles I endeavoured to remystify power. Eschewing political debate, he called on the arts of mannerism to re-elevate monarchy, to render its authority natural as well as divine.⁸⁷ Whether he would have succeeded remains

⁸² K. Wrightson, *English Society, 1580–1680* (1982), esp. ch. 2; cf. K. Wrightson and D. Levine, *Poverty and Piety in an English Village* (1979); C. Herrup, *The Common Peace: Participation and the Criminal Law in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1987); Herrup, 'Law and Morality in Seventeenth-Century England', *Past and Present*, 106 (1985), 102–23.

⁸³ This is the persuasive recurrent theme of Roy Strong's works. See, for example, *Holbein and Henry VIII* (1967); *The Cult of Elizabeth* (1977). See too his *The Tudor and Stuart Monarchy* (3 vols., Woodbridge, 1995); below ch. 12. ⁸⁴ G. Donaldson, *The Scottish Reformation* (1960).

⁸⁵ See J. Wormald, 'James VI and I: Two Kings or One?', *History*, 68 (1983), 187–209.

⁸⁶ Cf. below, ch. 2, pp. 94–5. ⁸⁷ See below, ch. 3; Sharpe, *Personal Rule*, ch. 5.

open to question – more open to question than scholars have allowed when we consider the power of the royal image in the 1650s. It may be no accident that in Caroline Britain the first overt resistance to a re-iconized monarchy came from a Scotland where politics, rather than being etherealized, remained a harsh exchange of words.⁸⁸ One element of the British problem ignored by its proponents is that where in England authority was aestheticized, in Scotland it was the subject of discursive and rational scrutiny.

Ironically, in England it may have been the legacy of mystery that facilitated violent conflict when the fact of division could no longer be shrouded. Men fought for and about monarchy because they could not accommodate reasoned difference concerning it.⁸⁹ The civil war, however, produced a voluminous and powerful pamphlet literature in which all aspects of authority were opened to debate and interrogation – even by a wider public sphere outside the privileged discursive community of the elite. The civil war desacralized authority and fully politicized culture.⁹⁰ The body of the monarch, under Elizabeth the site of a culture that contained and denied difference, was itself cut in two – and on the stage of the most elaborate rituals of the theatre of state.

Regicide and civil war necessitated a new and altered political culture. Contest and division were inescapable realities of political life; if violence were not to be endemic they had to be controlled, not denied. The inherent weakness of the Commonwealth was that it constructed no new culture of authority, but depended for its survival on a monopoly of violence, on a standing army. Interestingly after the collapse of the Commonwealth, Cromwell, perhaps as iconophobic as any by instinct, became as Protector complicit in some remystification of rule – to make authority an object of desire.⁹¹ Yet for all the stability he brought, royalist enemies and republican critics left him too dependent on an army and the nation on his death facing renewed civil conflict.

Gradually after 1660 a new political culture was constructed. True Charles II was greeted with triumphal arches and mythical tableaux celebrating Restoration,⁹² but his character was very much down-to-earth and his exercise of monarchy anything but ethereal.⁹³ As political argu-

⁸⁸ On the Scottish pamphlets of the late 1630s, see Sharpe, *Personal Rule*, 813–24.

⁸⁹ See below, ch. 2, pp. 116–18. ⁹⁰ Cf. Sharpe and Zwicker, *Refiguring Revolutions*, introduction.

⁹¹ See below, ch. 7, pp. 249–57.

⁹² See J. Ogilby, *The Entertainment of His Most Excellent Majestie Charles II* (1662), ed. R. Knowles (Binghamton, N.Y., 1988); and G. Reedy, 'Mystical Politics: the Imagery of Charles II's Coronation', in P. Korshin ed., *Studies in Change and Revolution* (Menston, 1972), 19–42.

⁹³ See R. Hutton, *Charles II* (Oxford, 1989).